Home Education

Frequently Asked Questions

When do I need to file an affidavit?

You must file an affidavit for each child you will be homeschooling when he or she is between the ages of 8 to 17. (24 P.S. 13-1326 - compulsory school age) You must file an affidavit when you begin the home education program and annually thereafter by August 1.

When does age 8 begin?

If your child turns eight before or during the first two weeks of the annual school term, or within the first two weeks of the second semester, if the school district in which you reside promotes students semi-annually, the affidavit needs to be filed by the child’s birth date. If the child turns 8 during the school term, the affidavit should be filed prior to the beginning of the next school year. (24 P.S. 13-1304 - admission of beginners). If the child has been enrolled in any school in grade 1 or above, you must file an affidavit whenever you begin homeschooling, regardless of the child’s age. (24 P.S. 24 13-1326)

Where can I get an affidavit form?

Affidavit forms may be found attached to the PDE Basic Education Circular (BEC 24 P.S 13-1327.1). Also, your school district may have a form, or you may create your own affidavit, following the requirements in the home education law. (24 P.S.13-1327.1(b1)). In the case of handicapped students, you will also need to refer to 24 P.S. 13-1327(d) which lists additional requirements.

What should I attach to the affidavit?

Attachments to the affidavit must include an outline of the educational objectives arranged by subject matter, evidence that the child has been immunized in accordance with the provisions of law and evidence that the child has received the health and medical services required for students of the child’s age or grade level. (Article 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code)

What are the Health requirements for homeschooled students?

Students in home education programs are required to be immunized in accordance with law and regulations of the Secretary of Health. (24 P. S. 13-1303a and 23 Pa. Code 23.83 - 84) Students in home education programs are also required to receive the health and medical services required for students of the child’s age or grade level. Each child of school age must be given an annual vision test, a hearing test and shall be measured and weighed. (Article 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code) Home education families may use the Department of Health’s form to document the child’s receipt of those services (Department of Health School Health Record). Each child must also have a medical examination and a comprehensive appraisal of his or her health at the following times:

- When beginning the home school program
- While enrolled in sixth grade
- While enrolled in eleventh grade
- When he/she is issued a farm or domestic service permit

(A medical examination is not necessary at the above points in time if an examination was obtained within the previous four months.)

Also, each child must have a dental examination at the following times:

- When beginning the home school program
- While enrolled in third grade
- While enrolled in seventh grade
What are the Section 111 (Criminal History or Act 34) Requirements for the Affidavit?

The supervisor of the home education program must certify on the affidavit that the supervisor, all adults living in the home and persons having legal custody of the child have not been convicted of the criminal offenses listed in the School Code. Section 24 P.S. 1-111 has a complete list of these offenses.

What are the Curriculum Requirements?

The home education law specifies the subjects that must be taught at elementary and secondary grade levels. See (24 P.S. 13-1327.1(c and d)). Chapter 5, Curriculum Requirements of the State Board of Education, mentioned in 24 P.S. 13-1327.1(c)(2), been repealed and replaced with 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4.

Where do I get curriculum and materials?

At the request of the supervisor, the school district must lend to the home education program copies of the school district's planned courses, textbooks and other curriculum materials appropriate to the student's age and grade level (24 P.S. 13-1327.1 (f)). The law does not require that the requested materials be provided within a particular period of time. However, PDE encourages school districts to work cooperatively with their homeschooling families in this regard in order to assist these families in providing a good educational experience to their children. In addition, some state and regional home education organizations hold curriculum fairs periodically so families can see and buy other materials. Many materials are available through teacher supply shops and directly from publishers.

When does my child need standardized tests?

Students in grades 3, 5 or 8 must be given a nationally normed standardized achievement test in reading/language arts and mathematics or the PSSA. The results of these tests must be in their portfolios. (24 P.S. 13-1327.1 (e)(1)).

What standardized tests fulfill that requirement?

PDE has established a list of nationally normed standardized tests which fulfill this requirement, per the law. See BEC 24 P.S.13-1327.1 for the list; (24 P.S.13-1327.1(e)(II) for the law.

Can my child have special accommodations when taking the nationally normed or state tests?

You are responsible for determining whether the test publisher allows for accommodations on the particular test you've chosen and to ensure that the publisher's policies are followed.

When is the portfolio due?

Each student's portfolio of records and materials, standardized test results (when required or if otherwise desired), and annual written evaluation of educational progress must be provided to the superintendent of the public school district of residence by June 30th of each school year. (24 P.S. 1-102) The superintendent may request the portfolio of records and materials, standardized test results and evaluation any time prior to June 30th if the superintendent has a reasonable belief that appropriate education is not occurring. (24 P.S. 13-1327.1(h)).

What are the home education requirements for students with disabilities?

The supervisor of a home education student who has been identified as needing special education services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), must have a certified special education teacher or licensed clinical or certified school psychologist's approval of the home education program. This requirement does not apply to students who have been identified as gifted or talented. (24 P.S. 13-1327(d)).
What responsibilities does the school district have for students with special needs?

If you believe your child is disabled and in need of special education services, but has not been evaluated, the school district in which you reside is required to evaluate the child, without charge, when you make such a request in writing. The district must hold a multi-disciplinary evaluation meeting with you to explain the results of the evaluation.

If you desire special education services, you may enroll your child in the public school to receive a free, appropriate public education, or you may ask the school district to provide service(s). If you ask for services, then you and the school district may come to an agreement as to what services will be provided and where. The school district is not obligated to provide special education services if you do not enroll your child, however. Any services which are agreed to may be provided in a public school or private school which is licensed to provide such programs and services; these services will not be provided in your home. (24 P.S. 13-1327(d)).

Are there any organizations of homeschooling families that serve my area?

PDE has developed a list of Home Education Organizations Serving Pennsylvania Families. These are regional, statewide and national associations and agencies which provide a variety of services to homeschooling families. These statewide and regional organizations often keep a list of support groups which serve a smaller geographic area, such as a city or township.

How does a homeschooled child receive a high school diploma?

Although a school district does not issue a diploma to a student in home education, other diplomas are available:

- A student may fulfill the necessary requirements of a home school organization to receive a home school diploma
- A student may successfully complete the GED test and receive the Commonwealth Secondary Diploma
- A student may successfully complete 1 year or 30 semester hours at an accredited postsecondary institution and submit that information to PDE and receive a Commonwealth Secondary Diploma.

How does an organization become recognized by PDE to issue homeschool diplomas?

An organization serving homeschooling families may apply for PDE recognition by completing the Home Education Association Application for Recognition. Instructions for completion of this material and necessary attachments are included.

If a child is enrolled in a public or private school after home schooling, how is it determined to which grade level the child is assigned, and/or what high school credits will be awarded?

The law does not speak to this question. The school district of residence, or the private school in which the child is enrolled, will determine the grade to which the student will be assigned and/or the high school credits earned for home education work, pursuant to district policy.

Can my child participate in curricular or extra-curricular activities at the school district where we live?

The school district where you reside has the discretion to make school activities available to home-educated students. Many school districts have established a written policy on participation of homeschooled students in curricular programs, such as science classes, computer labs, and foreign language courses and extra-curricular activities such as sports, band and clubs. Please contact your local school district for this information. Please remember, however, that school districts are not required to allow home-educated students to participate in activities.

Is the parent required to do all the teaching?
The supervisor of the program, the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child or children, shall be responsible for the provision of instruction. That person is not required to provide all of the instruction. (24 P. S. 13-1327, 1 (a)).